

The Dirty Dozen and the Clean Fifteen: A Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce

Pesticides are chemicals used to control agricultural pests that damage crops and livestock and contaminate our air, soil, and water, in addition to other plants and animals. Pesticides are lipid (fat) soluble and accumulate in our fatty tissues; therefore, they are a danger to human health. Many of these chemicals are known to cause cancer, immune system suppression, birth defects, nervous system damage, and disruption of hormones.

According to the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a research and advocacy organization, consumers can reduce their pesticide exposure by 80% by avoiding the most contaminated fruits and vegetables. The EWG has labeled these fruits and vegetables as "The Dirty Dozen" and they are listed below in order from most to least contaminated. To reduce your exposure to pesticides, try to buy organic varieties of these foods:

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|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Peach | 7. Cherries |
| 2. Apples | 8. Kale |
| 3. Bell Pepper | 9. Lettuce |
| 4. Celery | 10. Grapes (imported) |
| 5. Nectarine | 11. Carrots |
| 6. Strawberries | 12. Pears |

The EWG has also created a list of fruits and vegetables that are least likely to contain pesticide residue even if they are not organically grown, known as "The Clean Fifteen", and they are listed below, from most to least clean:

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| 1. Onion | 9. Cabbage |
| 2. Avocado | 10. Eggplant |
| 3. Sweet corn | 11. Papaya |
| 4. Pineapple | 12. Watermelon |
| 5. Mango | 13. Broccoli |
| 6. Asparagus | 14. Tomato |
| 7. Sweet peas | 15. Sweet Potato |
| 8. Kiwi | |

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Visit www.ewg.org to download *A Shopper's Guide to Pesticides* that you can take with you to the grocery store so when you're shopping, you'll know which produce to buy organic, and which conventionally-grown fruits and vegetables are okay if organic isn't available.